



Congressman
BENNIE THOMPSON
 REPRESENTING THE SECOND DISTRICT OF MISSISSIPPI



The Thompson Report

Evacuees, Not Refugees

Citizen Preparedness—Are You Ready?

We Are Our Brothers Keeper

MS-02 District's Response to Hurricane Katrina

MISSISSIPPI

AGRICULTURE
 BLUES
 HISTORY



Evacuees, Not Refugees

There is a difference. Refugees are those individuals who are outside of his or her county of nationality; and in many cases they are fleeing their homes by choice not force. Evacuees are individuals forced or moved from a disaster area to a reception area.

Hurricane Katrina and poor preparation and response from the Government on all levels has caused over 1 million people to be forced to leave their homes. Katrina's mighty blow ravaged three States, MS, LA, and AL. We are in synch in our belief that

it is impossible to be without error—which is a fundamental trait of humans. But after 9/11, we certainly should be better prepared. As Ranking Member of Homeland Security, I promise to

work diligently to ensure America is prepared to handle any threat, whether it is by man, nature, unexpected and expected.

According to the Washington Post... Michael Brown admitted to underestimating the impact of Hurricane Katrina, whose winds and water swamped the agency's preparations. As

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"Evacuees are individuals forced or moved from a disaster area to a reception area."

We Are Our Brothers Keeper

Over two dozen nations have offered assistance to victims of Hurricane Katrina. States all across the US have opened their doors and hearts as well. Individuals have volunteered their time, energy, given money, said prayers, and more for victims. We all

consider ourselves as our brothers keeper.

There has been much emotional talk and heated discussion about the slow response by the federal government to the res-



*Our thoughts
 and prayers are
 with you all...*
 Picture courtesy of
 New Orleans Online

cue of victims of Hurricane Katrina. The information I want to share is that in most cases, Local and State governments jointly are responsible for protecting and meeting the needs of citizens in midst of

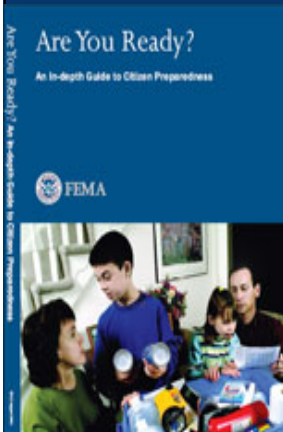
a disaster. But when the need to response is beyond the reach of those governments, the Federal Government should step up to the plate.

The Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act of 1988 outlines the steps by

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Citizen Preparedness—Are You Ready?



Are You Ready? An In-Depth Guide in Citizen Preparation

"Being prepared is practical and necessary—we can't prevent disasters but we can be ready!"

Disaster can strike quickly and sometimes without warning but nevertheless, hindsight is 20/20 in some cases. It is impossible to guarantee that a disaster will not happen but we can do our best to help individuals, families, and communities prepare for the before, during and after affects in an effort to reduce impacts from deaths to property. It has been over two weeks since Katrina hit and four years since the 9/11 attacks in the U.S.

One of the responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security is to not only provide physical and financial assistance but information to the general

public. We have prepared the most comprehensive guide that provides information for individuals, entire families and communities to learn how to protect themselves against all types of hazards (e.g., Hurricanes, Household Chemical Emergencies, Explosions, Terrorism, Mudslides, etc.) It contains information from training volunteers to developing practices and maintaining emergency plans.

Citizen Corps is a community managed group of citizens including but not limited to emergency medical, volunteer organizations, law enforcement and the private sector. They are charged with educating the com-

munity, training citizens, and help devise the community plan to address local disasters. Citizen Corp is implements several federal programs at the local level such as FEMA-CERT.

The Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) is a local response to disasters. Inevitably local response is the most immediate and first response at the local level. Community volunteers learn about disasters and ways to prepare and help themselves and others until help arrives. Twenty-hours of training is required and sponsored at the local level.

A certificate of completion is available for those who complete the Are You

Ready Guide, undergo the training and successfully score 75 percent on the required exam. If you are interested in receiving the certificate please contact FEMA Independent Study Program by calling 1-800-238-2258. For more information on any of these programs you may also visit www.fema.gov, or to order the *Are You Ready* guide call 1-800-480-2520. Being prepared is practical and necessary—we can't prevent disasters but we can be ready!

For more information, please contact Juliet Thomas in my Greenville office at 662-335-9003.

Visit Congressman Thompson on the Web at www.house.gov/thompson.

We Are Our Brothers Keeper



Pictures from left to right: woman searching for loved ones, victims wading through water, women comforting each other, and children being cared for

which to request Federal assistance. And the Federal Emergency Management Agency is charged with coordinating the Federal response. Once a Disaster Declaration has been declared, Federal programs and funding becomes immediately available along with other types of help to assist in the response and recovery effort.

As in any case when dealing with Federal assistance, it comes with a process which can slow. It also falls in many categories, levels, and has requirements. This process can add to the stress already being experienced and there is no doubt about it.

In the wake of Hurricane Katrina and response, it does and will be reviewed at a later time for the sake of improving the Federal response. The past is to be used as a learning tool. Now, I want to see us get beyond the finger pointing, familiarize ourselves with the federally approved response plan, and improve that plan because we now have a second chance to do better and get it right this time—

because Hurricane Rita is headed straight for the United States. After all we are our brothers keeper.

For more information, please contact Timla G. Washington in my Greenville office at 662-335-9003.

"...we now have a second chance to do better and get it right this time—because Hurricane Rita is headed straight for the United States. After all we are our brothers keeper."

Evacuees, Not Refugees

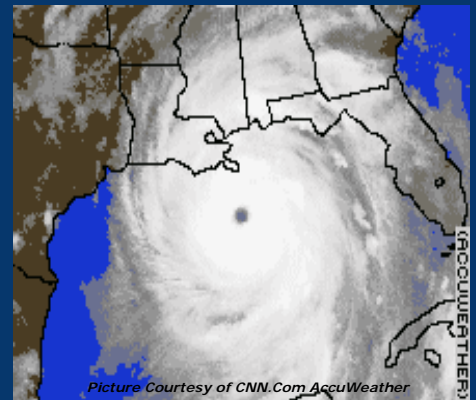
the nation reeled at images of calamity, he appeared to blame storm victims by noting that the crisis was worsened in New Orleans when residents failed to evacuate prior to the storm.

The tragic effects of Hurricane Katrina will live with us forever. Our "NEIGHBORS," Louisiana and Alabama were not the only one displaced and affected. Parts of Mississippi was also affected. Many communities in my District were altered by Hurricane Katrina. A District assessment of all the communities returned reports of power outages, needs for

bottled water, needs of generators, damaged homes, trees down, a need for resources to help care for Evacuees, and much more. I was a Supervisor in Hinds County when Hurricane Camille hit. But never have we met or seen such devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina.

We are our brothers keeper! When a State, Community, Government, Individual, or Group has exhausted local resources, it is our moral duty to respond in a supportive manner.

For more information, contact Juliet Thomas in my Greenville Office



A still digital image of Hurricane Katrina and the massive amount of area that she ploughed through.

MS-02 District's Response to Hurricane Katrina

The 2nd Congressional District is twenty-three Counties large, and within each County are many communities. It became

"...the last thing I wanted was to not be able to offer some information or assistance of any kind."

immediate shelter for over ——— evacuees. I can recall being a County Supervisor in Hinds County when Hurricane Camille hit and hindsight stepped in allowing me to shift gears and put into motion my District plan to address a disaster.

Monday morning, the phones began ringing with questions about Hurricane Katrina. County and Community Officials in the District was contacted along with Civil Defense Coordinators to assess damages, to find out if evacuees were in their care, and if there were immediate

needs for heavy machinery (e.g., Chain Saws, Generators, etc.). One reason why this was necessary was because a few months ago newly elected officials took office in various communities and were not familiar with the Recovery process and requirements for

FEMA and MEMA assistance. So, I felt the need to inform them so they could do their job efficiently. Our phone lines were down in all of the District Offices and Staff used their private cell phones to carry out their jobs and gave their number to elected officials so they could continue communication.

It was also vital to be able to communicate with other Federal agencies (e.g., FEMA) and Non-profits (e.g., Red Cross). All staff in the District were asked to focus time and effort on contacting all

businesses, federal agencies, non-profits, and whom ever would be a resource for the issue in which they were assigned. By the way, these tasks were in addition to regular responsibilities. These issues were Shelters, Re-



*Mississippi's Second Congressional District Representative
Bennie G. Thompson, MS-02*

sources and Donations, Housing, FEMA, MEMA, Missing Relatives, Complaints, Medical and Health, Social Security, Employment and Unemployment Benefits, Public Assistance, Recovery and Relief, Complaints, etc.

Phone calls came from

many people for numerous reasons. And the last thing I wanted was to not be able to offer some information or assistance. We received a call from a constituent who said, she talked with her family, who lived in a small community near the coast and wanted to drive and pick them up but was upset because the roads were closed. A member of my staff assigned to work our of MEMA office was able to answer her questions.

In the presence of all that was going on, we too learned things that could help us in the future if ever we are faced with such a situation again. Some of which, when we take a look at the Federal Response to Katrina later, I will be able to provide beneficial insight.

For more information, please contact Timla G. Washington in my Greenville office at 662-335-9003.

United States Representative Bennie G. Thompson
 U.S. House of Representatives
 Email: ThompsonMS2nd@mail.house.gov



~HURRICANE KATRINA FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES ~

- ◆ US Postal Service wants to help reconnect families torn apart due to Hurricane Katrina through mail delivery. Call 1-800-275-8777.
- ◆ Department of Employment Security is processing claims for victims. Call 1-800-818-7811 from 3-7pm.
- ◆ Department of Labor has three programs to offer immediate income assistance to displaced workers 1) unemployed workers; 2) Disaster unemployment Insurance for the newly employed and self-employed nor normally eligible for unemployment insurance and; 3) Temporary jobs funded through National Emergency Grants. Call 1-866-487-2365.
- ◆ HUD and FEMA are working together to help disaster victims with all their housing concerns. Call 1-888-297-8685. Section 8 Voucher holders or public housing residents call 1-800-955-2232.
- ◆ Immigration and Customs Enforcement is assisting international students impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Call 1-800-961-5294.
- ◆ Department of Health and Human Services is providing benefits such as TANF, child care support, foster care assistance, Medicaid, SCHIP, etc. Call 1-800-273-8255.
- ◆ Department of Justice has established the Hurricane Katrina Fraud Task Force. Call 1-877-FTCHELP.
- ◆ The US Department of Justice is working with the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Call 1-888-544-5475.

**Many agencies and offices are still experiencing a high volume of phone calls and communication problems due to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita.*

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 335 Peach Street
 Marks, Mississippi 38646
 (662) 326-9003

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